



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## AN ENGLISH SERVICE SYSTEM

---

ALICE BIDWELL

Formerly of Freeport High School, Freeport, Illinois

---

After several years of earnest effort to secure the active co-operation of other high-school instructors in the correction of spoken and written English, the members of our department felt that we were not getting results from any of the methods we had used. When she really wants to accomplish a definite end and all previous means have failed, the night watches of an English teacher sometimes bring at last the desired suggestion. It was in this way that the plan for an "English service system" came to me.

I had been visiting the home of a friend who found it hard to decide what kind of an automobile her father should give her, and during the arguments for various cars I had heard a great deal about the advantages of certain ones because of the "service" provided, which was both excellent and conveniently near. The word "service" in this application for some reason stuck in my mind, and it occurred to me that our English factory ought to establish a service department where all students could be repaired or adjusted in their speech and writing.

It has since been brought to my attention that a similar scheme is used in other schools, but unless it prevails quite generally an outline of our system may be helpful to some other English teachers who are struggling now as we were formerly.

First of all, the plan takes both time and money, but not much of either. Three sets of blanks, a loose-leaf notebook, and a filing case must be purchased. One set of blanks (Blank A) is in the form of pads to be distributed to all the teachers in the school, one (Blank B) in the form of notice slips to be sent from the office to English teachers, and one (Blank C) in the form of index cards for locating all students in their English courses. The principal's secretary does the clerical work of the service system in our school.

and after the preliminary arrangements are made no one teacher spends much time on the service.

On each student's file card, besides his name, are placed the course he is taking at present, the name of the instructor in that course, and the same two facts about him in the preceding semester. On Thursday of each week the secretary collects from all the teachers their blanks (A) telling what students have made serious English mistakes in their classes and offering suggestions about the avoidance of such mistakes. These blanks are kept in a loose-leaf notebook, and from them the secretary sends a report (B) every Friday to the English teachers who are responsible for the erring pupils at present or have been in the immediate past. On Monday each English teacher is asked to see the students who have made the mistakes, talk with them about the difficulty, drill the whole class in the problem if advisable, or give the culprits some special work to remedy their bad habits. If the mistake was made by someone formerly in her class, she makes a note of the fact that drill in this particular problem has been ineffectual during the preceding semester and plans to make it effectual with her present class. Each English teacher keeps a file of the reports of her students, and at the end of the semester certain results are made known.

It was not necessary to make any effort to arouse interest in the plan. The students were so eager about it that they came and asked for pads on which to put down the mistakes made by some of their teachers. When this impertinence (though one of tragic import) was discouraged, the service system still interested the students, and to increase the impetus for individuals and classes the teachers decided upon some other devices. One of these was that any student who had ten reports handed in against him should be required to tutor and take a special examination in conversational English before receiving his credit in the present English course. Several people just saved their lives after eight or nine reports and learned at least to bridle their tongues. No one student was the subject of ten reports. Besides this, the department invited to a party to be given at the end of the semester the class—Senior, Junior, Sophomore, or Freshman—which had fewest reports against

BLANK A  
ENGLISH SERVICE DEPARTMENT

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Student	Subject	Mistake	Suggestions

BLANK B

TEACHER \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_

MISTAKE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SUGGESTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

REPORTED BY \_\_\_\_\_

BLANK C

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

	Course	Teacher
Last Semester		
This Semester		

its members. The records were as follows: Seniors 42, Juniors 29, Sophomores 76, Freshmen 64. As the pupils soon urged in their own defense, these figures were not an accurate estimate of the correctness of the English used by the classes, since some teachers were very much more careful than others about reporting mistakes, and moreover the classes were not all of the same size. But it was as fair a scheme as could be formed for estimating roughly which of the four classes took the most pride in writing and speaking correctly. The party which was given to the Juniors was a *matinée* dance in the gymnasium preceded by a burlesque by the English teachers of a Junior board of control meeting.

The English teachers are pleased with the results of the semester's trial of our service system. When school opened several asked me if it was not to be continued this year. The principal said to me at the close of last semester, "Whatever you do in the English department, keep on with the service system." We are using it again, emphasizing at our teachers' meetings more strongly than before that its success depends upon the serious co-operation of all the teachers, and that its results will be universally beneficial. It is our first step toward that correlation of English composition and the content subjects for which we are all industriously hoping.